

A rapid review of the literature on palliative and end of life care in prisons: 2014-2018

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Older prisoners represent the fastest growing age group in UK prisons (1), and are twice as likely to have palliative and end of life care needs than someone of the same age and gender outside prison (2).

Aims:

This review sought to explore current practice in relation to palliative and end of life care in prisons, and to make recommendations for its future provision

Methods:

Rapid review methodology was employed, streamlining the systematic review process to deliver timely results (3).

6 databases were searched (ASSIA, CINAHL, Embase, Medline, National criminal justice research service, and Scopus

Articles published between **2014-2018** were included (a 2016 systematic review by Wion & Loeb (4) collected data till mid 2014)

Articles were screened and quality appraised, data were extracted and subject to a **thematic analysis** (5)

The findings were presented in a **narrative synthesis**

Results:

411 articles retrieved, 192 duplicates removed, 189 title/abstracts excluded, 7 full-text excluded.

23 full-text articles appraised and included (16 qualitative, 6 quantitative and 1 mixed-methods)

Fostering relationships Inmate hospice volunteers build and maintain close relationships with the prisoners in their care (key finding 2)

is important to prisoners with palliative and end of life care needs (key finding 1)

The **conflict between care and custody can have a negative impact** on the delivery of palliative and end of life care in prison (key finding 3)

Discussion:

Palliative and end of life care in prison presents a number of unique challenges. Novel solutions such as inmate hospice volunteers can help to meet these challenges, yet focus should also remain on well-established palliative care practices, such as facilitating visitation and maintaining relationships. However, there is always potential for conflict between the priorities of palliative care and the necessities of the prison environment and regime. Nurses who care for prisoners in prison, and those who encounter them outside must be mindful of these challenges when planning and delivering care.

